

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed July 5, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and, in view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-64 are cancelled. Claims 65-100 are currently pending in the application, with claims 65, 75, 85, and 93 being independent claims.

The Office Action rejects each of claims 29-45 and 52-64, which are now cancelled, under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over a combination of U.S. Patent Number 2,120,348 to Bezault and U.S. Patent Number 5,331,610 to Kikuchi. As discussed below, the Applicant submits that claims 65-100 are allowable over this rejection.

The Office Action also objects to various claims under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 65-100 remedy this objection.

Discussion of Claims 65-74

Independent claim 65 recites a timepiece configured to be worn on a wrist of a wearer. The timepiece has a case that includes a timing element. In addition, the timepiece has a band extending from at least one side of the case. The band has a first link and an adjacent second link. The first link is joined to the second link, and the first link includes a first extension element, a first cover member, a connecting springbar, and a joining springbar. The first extension element defines a connecting channel and a separate joining channel. The first extension element has a outward-facing surface and an opposite wrist-facing surface, with the wrist-facing surface being positioned to face the wrist. The first cover member is positioned adjacent the outward-facing surface of the first extension element. The first cover member extends over a portion of the first extension element that has the connecting channel, and the first cover member has a pair of side portions that extend toward the wrist-facing surface of the first extension element. The side portions define apertures aligned with the connecting channel and positioned adjacent ends of the connecting channel. The connecting springbar extends through the first connecting channel and interfaces with the apertures to connect the first extension element to the first cover member. The joining springbar extends through the joining channel to join the first link to the second link.

The Office Action combines Bezault and Kikuchi in rejecting the claims. Bezault discloses a bracelet formed from a plurality of joined elements. In contrast with the claimed matter, Bezault does not disclose a case and timing element. Accordingly, the rejection combines Bezault with Kikuchi, which discloses a watch having a case and timing element.

The plurality of joined elements in Bezault include, for example, main elements 23 and 24 and binding elements 23' and 24'. According to the Applicant's understanding of the rejection, main elements 23 and 24 are analogous to the claimed extension elements, and binding elements 23' and 24' are analogous to the claimed cover members.

According to independent claim 65, the first cover member extends over a portion of the first extension element that has the connecting channel. While the binding elements may extend over a portion of the main elements in Bezault, the binding elements do not extend over a portion of the main elements that form a connecting channel. Referring to Figure 5 of Bezault, main element 24 is depicted as defining various protrusions 35 through which a pin extends to join binding element 24' to main element 24. Note that binding element 24' extends between protrusions 35 and does not extend over a portion of main element 24 that forms protrusions 35. In contrast with independent claim 65, therefore, Bezault does not disclose a configuration wherein the first cover member (binding element 24') extends over a portion of the first extension element (main element 24) that has the connecting channel (protrusions 35). Rather, Bezault discloses a configuration wherein the first cover member (binding element 24') extends over a portion of the first extension element (main element 24) that is between portions forming the channel (protrusions 35).

According to independent claim 65 the first cover member has a pair of side portions that extend toward the wrist-facing surface of the first extension element. The binding elements of Bezault have a curved configuration that extends through apertures in the main elements. The binding elements do not have, however, side portions that extend toward the wrist-facing surface of the main elements. Even if the Examiner should argue that the binding elements do have side portions (which the Applicant does not concede), the side portions do not define apertures aligned with the connecting channel and positioned adjacent ends of the connecting channel. More particularly, binding element 24', for example, does not define apertures aligned with protrusions 35 and positioned adjacent ends of a channel defined by protrusions 35.

Based upon the above discussion, the Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 65 is allowable over the prior art of record. In addition, claims 66-74 should be allowable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, claims 67-70 should be allowable as the combination of Bezault and Kikuchi does not teach or suggest cover members extending over a crystal. Claim 71 should be allowable as the materials claimed are not taught or suggested by the combination of Bezault and Kikuchi.

Discussion of Claims 75-100

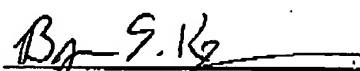
Independent claims 75, 85, and 93 should also be allowable as these claims include the features discussed above for independent claim 65. More particularly, independent claims 75, 85, and 93 recite that (1) the first cover member extends over a portion of the first extension element that has the connecting channel, (2) the first cover member has a pair of side portions that extend toward the wrist-facing surface of the first extension element, (3) and the side portions define apertures aligned with the connecting channel and positioned adjacent ends of the connecting channel. Accordingly, independent claims 75, 85, and 93 should be allowable, and claims 76-84, 86-92, and 94-100 should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are in a condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully requests, therefore, that the rejections be withdrawn and that this application now be allowed.

This Amendment is being timely filed by facsimile transmission on August 30, 2005. Should additional fees or an extension of time be deemed necessary for consideration of this Amendment, such fees or extension are hereby requested and the Commissioner is authorized to charge deposit account number 19-0733 for the payment of the requisite fee. If anything further is desirable to place the application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned representative at (503) 425-6800.

Respectfully submitted,

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